

SEVENTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL

FOR

IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY,

PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

1855.



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R E P O R T .

*Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth,
Boston, January, 1855.*

TO THE CORPORATION : —

GENTLEMEN, — The Trustees, having been appointed by the Corporation and the Executive of the Commonwealth to take the general management of this School, and all the collateral interests of income, property, expenditure, &c. for the year, have discharged their duty, and beg leave to report the history and result of their administration.

They delegated the immediate administration to Dr. S. G. Howe, who nominated suitable officers, teachers, assistants, &c. The Trustees have themselves visited the School sufficiently often to keep themselves familiar with its operation, with the proceedings of the persons employed, and the condition and progress of the children intrusted to their care.

The Trustees divided themselves into sub-committees, to take the general oversight each for a month. These committees consist each of two of this board, one going out and another coming in at the end of each month, and these were to visit

the School at least once in two weeks. The Trustees are happy to say that this work has been cheerfully and faithfully performed, and the institution always kept within the observation of some members of their board.

As in the preceding years, the institution has been under the immediate superintendence of Dr. S. G. Howe, whose services have been gratuitously and effectively given to this work from the very beginning. He established the Experimental School in 1848; and he has through all the intervening time given his attention to the work, without other reward than the high consciousness of doing a great good to the unfortunate, many of whom cannot appreciate the blessings they have enjoyed at his hands, still less thank him for his kindness.

Mrs. Macdonald, the judicious and kind Matron, has rendered very satisfactory service. The services of the subordinate teachers have also been satisfactory.

On account of the great rise in price of provisions and wages, it has been more expensive to keep the institution in operation than in previous years. The five thousand dollars which the State grants yearly, and which was sufficient to support the thirty State pupils, is now barely, perhaps not quite enough to board them. In this state of things, the Trustees hope that the annual grant from the Commonwealth may be increased.

The institution is not living in its own house, but in a hired estate, which, although it answers the present purposes tolerably well, yet is not what is wanted for the future. The Trustees hope that means will be

given to purchase grounds, and to build a suitable house for the accommodation of the School ; which they commend to the charitable consideration of the wealthy and the benevolent. But especially do they commend the institution to the Legislature, who are the guardians of the orphan, the protectors of the weak, and who provide for all the suffering children of the Commonwealth.

They have appointed a committee to memorialize the General Court, and ask for a further annual grant to meet the wants of the increasing number who ask for this opportunity of education and development, and also to meet the increased expenses of living at the present time. The same committee are also instructed to ask for a grant to enable the Corporation to put the School on a permanent foundation, in its own house. Other States are doing this. New York has given forty thousand dollars, and is building a large and commodious house at Syracuse for its feeble-minded children. Pennsylvania has made a similar appropriation for the erection of a house within its borders. It will not be supposed that Massachusetts, whose citizens made the first proposition for a school of this kind in America, and by whose bounty the first school was opened, in 1848, will now be behind her sister States who followed her example to begin their establishments, and are now setting her an example by putting them on a permanent foundation.

This matter is commended to the active and warmest sympathies of the members of the Corporation, in confidence that they will lend their influence in every way and place possible to advance the interests of the School.

Grateful for the past, and hoping more for the future, the Trustees again commend this institution to the Legislature, to the public, and to the benevolent.

JOHN A. ANDREW,	}	<i>In behalf of the Corporation.</i>
SAMUEL DOWNER,		
SAMUEL ELIOT,		
SAMUEL HOAR,		
JAMES LODGE,		
EDWARD JARVIS,	}	<i>In behalf of the State.</i>
WILLIAM MINOT,		
ROBERT W. HOOPER,		
GEORGE OSBORNE,		
MARSHALL S. PERRY,		
STEPHEN M. WELD,		

EDWARD JARVIS, *Secretary.*

REPORT.

*Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth,
Boston, January, 1855.*

TO THE TRUSTEES : —

GENTLEMEN, — It is, perhaps, the worst consequence of the limited pecuniary means of this institution, that it is still unable to pay such a salary as will secure an able and efficient Superintendent. It is on this account that, in compliance with your request, the undersigned has continued to give to the management of its affairs as much time and attention as could be spared from other duties, in the hope, however, (so often deferred,) of being soon relieved. Such services as you can give, and as he can give, may be all that can be afforded, but they are not all that the establishment requires.

The undersigned has done what he could towards shaping the policy and directing the general affairs of the institution, without, however, being able to give such close attention as is desirable to its details. Fortunately, we have a Matron and Teachers upon whose zeal and fidelity we may reasonably rely.

The Reports that have been submitted to you quarterly showed in detail the condition and opera-

tions of the School. The annual one need, therefore, be only a general summary of the whole. It may, however, properly be in such form, and illustrated by such remarks, as will give some idea of the general history and objects of the School to those who have not seen the former Annual Reports.

The School had its origin in that feeling of respect for humanity, which is pained by the thought that any who bear its image are left unembraced in the common bond of brotherly love, and outcast from the common family, however low in the scale, or however deformed and infirm they may be.

This feeling lies deep in the hearts of the people of Massachusetts, and has never been appealed to in vain, whether for the insane, the deaf, the blind, or the infirm of any class; and it led the Legislature promptly to embrace the idiot in the circle of the State's bounties, when asked to do so.

There was no question about cost and return. There was no hesitation arising from the prevailing belief that idiots must always remain idiots. There they stood, — their infirmity their only claim; but that claim was admitted instantly, and all the more readily because of their own inability to urge it. Be their chance for improvement greater or less, still they were human, and, as such, entitled to every possible opportunity and aid for developing to the utmost their capacity for knowledge, virtue, and happiness.

Such were the feelings and views of those who, nine years ago, asked the Legislature of Massachusetts to ascertain the number and condition of the idiots of the Commonwealth, and, two years afterwards, to provide for their proper care and instruc-

tion; and such was the spirit in which they were met. Provision was made immediately for an Experimental School, which, proving successful, was made a permanent one, and to which additional aid was granted. That School has now been in uninterrupted and successful operation more than seven years. During all this time it has been properly a State School, because the State provided the principal means for its existence. That existence has not been the less real, or less historical, because the establishment has been carried on in a building not expressly constructed for it. It is a shallow notion that wood and stone, put together in a particular form, constitute an institution, or even its essential features.

During all this time, the School has been performing its work of beneficence, and its effects have been felt at home and abroad. Not only was the public heart and conscience quickened and improved by making an effort in behalf of these unfortunates, as a matter of manifest duty, though with ever so small prospect of success; but a conviction was produced in the minds of thousands who had despaired of any good practical results, that those results were most evident and valuable. The conviction is becoming common in Massachusetts, that idiots are educable to a considerable extent; and the duty of providing for their instruction and training at the public expense is generally admitted.

This change has not been effected here alone, but it has extended to other States. In New York, where Dr. Baccus had been the early, able, and zealous champion of the cause, the Legislature, which he had earnestly but vainly urged to make provision for a

school for idiots, was at last prevailed upon to do so, mainly in consequence of an exhibition in their hall of pupils from our School.

The following letter from the Hon. Christopher Morgan, then Secretary of the Board of Education, is an interesting historical document.

Albany, March 23, 1852.

DEAR SIR,— I remember with great satisfaction your visit to Albany with the idiotic pupils under your charge. Previous to your visit, I had regarded the institutions for the instruction of idiots rather as asylums for the improvement of the physical condition of the idiots, than for educational purposes.

A very attentive examination of your pupils convinced me that their physical defects might be in a great measure remedied, and their minds cultivated and enlarged to an extent far beyond anything I had imagined.

The exhibition before the Legislature was eminently satisfactory and convincing.

Dr. Baccus, recently a State Senator, and an enlightened and philanthropic citizen of Rochester, labored with zeal and fidelity, though unsuccessfully, to establish an institution for idiots in this State. Very soon after your visit to Albany, a law was passed for the establishment of an Institution for Idiots; an appropriation of six thousand dollars a year, for two years, was made, and the Institution is now in successful operation in the vicinity of the city, under the judicious management of Dr. Wilbur.

It may now be regarded as permanently established, and to your visit, more than anything else, are we indebted to this noble charity, so creditable to the liberality and benevolence of the State.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

CHRISTOPHER MORGAN.

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC CHILDREN,
Boston, Mass.

The New York School was organized very soon after at Albany, and put under the charge of a citizen of Massachusetts, Dr. Wilbur, who had gained valuable experience in a private school for imbecile children, founded and conducted by himself. He conducted the new State School with eminent ability and success. In consequence of this success, the State has made generous provision for the permanency of the institution, by laying the foundations of a large and commodious edifice at Syracuse, to be devoted for ever to the training and teaching of idiotic children.

In Pennsylvania, too, the impulse has been felt. Another citizen of Massachusetts, Mr. J. B. Richards, who had been the successful teacher of our Experimental School, went thither and devoted himself to the cause. A school has been established there, which will doubtless soon grow into a large and permanent State institution.

Rhode Island, too, has recognized the claims of the idiot to participation in the common blessing of instruction, and made provision for sending some to this School.

The impulse thus given will not stop here. It will be felt in other States and communities, and they will recognize the Christian duty, not only of providing nurture for the ninety-and-nine, but also of going out to seek the one that has so long been lost, and great shall be the joy over its recovery.

Such are some of the general effects of the establishment and existence of this School. The more particular ones may be briefly stated.

One hundred and thirteen pupils have been admit-

ted to the School since its commencement in 1848, of whom forty-one still continue under its charge.

It has been absolutely necessary to limit the number of pupils, according to the ability of the Institution to provide for them, and accordingly many who have sought admission have not yet found it. The aim has been, as far as is possible, to admit those whose age and condition gave chance for improvement. Nevertheless, as it is difficult in many cases, and impossible in some, to ascertain at first sight whether a child is capable of improvement, a wide door has been opened, and some admitted with but little hope of their being retained. On ascertaining the existence of confirmed insanity, or epilepsy, or other disorders which are beyond the reach of the curative means possessed by the Institution, such children have been discharged, to make room for other and more improvable cases.

The chief objects aimed at have been, first, to put the pupils into the best possible condition of health and vigor ; to develop strength and activity of body ; and to train them to the command and use of muscle and limb. Second, to check inordinate animal appetites ; to correct unseemly habits ; to accustom them to temperance, cleanliness, and order ; and to strengthen their powers of self-control, so that they may be at least less unsightly or disagreeable to others. Third, to train them to some habits of industry, so that they may be at least less burdensome to others in after life. Fourth, to develop as far as possible their mental faculties and moral sentiments, by exercises and lessons suitable to their feeble condition and capacities, and thus to elevate them in the scale of humanity.

With a few there has been no noticeable success in any of these respects; but this was because the idiocy was complicated, and aggravated by morbid activity of brain, or by other grave disorders of the system. With the great majority, however, there has been marked and gratifying success in the attainment of these objects. In some cases, the change in the appearance, condition, and habits of the children has been so great as to amount almost to a new creation. From sickly, gluttonous, stupid, and slothful creatures, they have become healthy, self-controlling, active, and comparatively bright children and youth. Some have been rescued from the category of idiocy, into which they had fallen by reason of disease, neglect, or unfavorable circumstances, rather than been born to it. Others have been so far improved as to become inoffensive even to the most fastidious persons, and to be capable of earning their livelihood under the care of kind and judicious friends.

If there has been any disappointment with respect to the degree of mental improvement which is attainable by idiotic children as a class, there has been none at all with regard to a number of individual cases. As to the capacity for general improvement in bodily condition and appearance, in personal habits, and capacity for usefulness, there has not only been no disappointment, but, on the contrary, more than full gratification of all expectations, and even hopes. This is put beyond all question by the testimony of numerous relatives and friends of the pupils, and by that of careful observers of the School.

In one respect the result has been unexpected,

namely, the more positive and marked advantage which the School has been to girls than to boys. The natural gentleness of the sex makes them more submissive, more docile, more ready to renounce bad habits, while they are more imitative and more desirous of pleasing. Then their greater fitness for sedentary and household life and duties qualifies them for usefulness in a sphere which boys cannot fill.

The Experimental School was for boys only ; and perhaps this was well, for success with them was a sure guaranty of greater success with girls. Experience shows, moreover, that it will be wise to give greater attention to mechanical operations, and less to mere school exercises, than was originally contemplated.

By the Report of the Treasurer, it will be seen that the total income for the year was six thousand eight hundred and sixty-two dollars and seventy-two cents, while the expenses were seven thousand one hundred and thirty-three dollars and eighty-seven cents. It has, however, been only by great economy, and by foregoing many advantages and enjoyments for the pupils, and by keeping down their number, that the expenditures can be kept within the income. There is urgent need of means of enlarging the establishment and receiving more pupils. If there were room and means of support, the present number would be more than doubled. Many of the children who are waiting for admission are evidently proper subjects for the School, but they are rapidly passing that period of life at which they are most susceptible of improvement.

May we not hope that the time is at hand when ample provision will be made for the proper nurture and instruction of every one of these, the most sorely afflicted of all the sons and daughters of affliction ?

Respectfully,

S. G. HOWE.

REPORT OF

Dr. *Massachusetts School for Idiots and Feeble-Minded Youth,*

1854, Jan. 24.	To Cash paid D. L. Bradford, Auditor's draft,	\$ 1,000.00
" Mar. 6.	" " " in part,	500.00
" April 7.	" " " balance,	500.00
" " 12.	" " Auditor's draft,	252.86
" " 14.	" " " in part,	500.00
" May 13.	" " " balance,	300.00
" July 14.	" " Auditor's draft,	700.00
" " "	" " " "	411.12
" " "	" " Globe Bank, money borrowed,	300.00
" " "	" " " interest on above,	1.00
" Oct. 9.	" " D. L. Bradford, Auditor's draft,	618.41
" " "	" " " "	600.00
" Nov. 26.	" " " "	200.24
" " "	" " " "	400.00
1855, Jan. 6.	" " " "	1,000.00
" " "	" " " "	351.24
" " 8.	Balance to new account,	364.19

\$7,999.06

I have examined the foregoing account, and find it correctly cast and vouched.

J. A. ANDREW, *Auditor.**Boston, Jan. 8, 1855.*

THE TREASURER.

in Account Current with STEPHEN FAIRBANKS, *Treasurer.* Cr.

1854, Jan. 9.	By	Cash, balance of old account,	\$ 636.34
" " 24.	"	received of W. Collingwood, on account of son,	15.00
" " " "	"	received of T. Boardman, for son,	50.00
" " " "	"	S. C. Savory, "	1.00
" " " "	"	H. C. Smith, "	403.16
" " " "	"	J. M. Mooney, "	25.00
" " " "	"	Mr. Pickering, sale of horse,	150.00
" March 6.	"	Dr. Phipps, . . .	100.00
" " " "	"	William Ross, . . .	100.00
" " " "	"	S. L. Perry, . . .	20.00
" " " "	"	J. M. Mooney, . . .	20.00
" April 7.	"	Commonwealth, second quarterly payment,	1,250.00
" " 14.	"	received of J. M. Mooney, . . .	40.00
" " " "	"	James Savory, . . .	24.64
" " " "	"	G. J. Hall, . . .	30.00
" May 13.	"	borrowed of Globe Bank, . . .	300.00
" June 30.	"	received of Commonwealth, third quarterly payment, . . .	1,250.00
" July 18.	"	Rent of Stable, . . .	43.83
" " " "	"	received of W. Collingwood, . . .	20.00
" " " "	"	J. M. Mooney, . . .	48.50
" " " "	"	William Ross, . . .	100.00
" " " "	"	R. Collingwood, . . .	20.00
" Aug. 2.	"	T. Boardman, . . .	10.00
" " " "	"	J. P. Brown, . . .	18.00
" " 4.	"	S. L. Perry, . . .	130.00
" " 17.	"	J. M. Mooney, . . .	20.00
" " 29.	"	Moses Foster, . . .	15.72
" Sept. 6.	"	M. Cutter, . . .	25.00
" Oct. 7.	"	Commonwealth, fourth quarterly payment, . . .	1,250.00
" " " "	"	R. L. Smith, . . .	125.00
" " " "	"	J. M. Mooney, . . .	20.00
" " 2.	"	William Ross, . . .	60.00
" " 9.	"	J. Boardman, . . .	30.00
" " 28.	"	Mr. Halswell, . . .	50.00
" Nov. 10.	"	C. Smith, . . .	150.00
" " 27.	"	Mr. Dickinson, . . .	74.50
" " " "	"	N. H. Small, . . .	111.37
" Dec. 8.	"	for sundry small articles, . . .	12.00
1855, Jan. 4.	"	of Commonwealth, first quarterly payment,	1,250.00

\$ 7,999.06

Errors excepted.

STEPHEN FAIRBANKS, *Treasurer.*

Boston, January 8, 1855.

APPENDIX.

Form of Questions to be answered by the Parents or Friends of Applicants for Admission to the School.

What is the applicant's name and age ?

Please give the date of the birth.

Were the father and mother related by blood ? and if so, in what degree ?

Have there been any cases of insanity, epilepsy, idiocy, blindness, deafness, or of any infirmity of body or mind, in the family of the father or of the mother, or any among his near relations ? If so, please to state what they were.

Do you know of any peculiarity of constitution, or of bodily condition, in any of the relatives of the father or of the mother ? For instance, are the members of either family consumptive or scrofulous, or subject to salt-rheum, or eruptions of any kind ?

What manner of man was the father bodily ? That is, was he strong and healthy, or weak and puny ?

What was his age at the time of the birth of the applicant ?

Was he a person of average mental ability ?

What was his business or calling ?

What were his habits with regard to temperance ?

What manner of woman was the mother bodily ?

What was her calling ?

What were her habits with regard to temperance ?

At what age was she married to the father of the applicant ?

Was she a person of average mental ability ?

How many children has she had ?

How many before, and how many after, the birth of the applicant ?

How old was she when the applicant was born ?

Was there anything peculiar in the bodily or mental condition of any of the other children ?

What was the state of the mother's bodily health during the time she was pregnant with the applicant ?

Was she subject to any bodily injury, or disease, or to any extraordinary mental emotions, as fright, grief, &c. ?

Was the child born at the full period of gestation ?

Were there any extraordinary circumstances attendant upon the delivery ? If so, describe them.

What has been the general health and the bodily condition of the applicant ?

At what period was it first observed that there was anything peculiar about the applicant ?

Has there been observed, at any time since birth, anything peculiar in the shape or condition of the head ?

Does the head now differ in shape or condition from the head of ordinary persons of the same age ?

What is now the general health of the applicant ?

Is the applicant now subject, or has he ever been subject, to epilepsy ?

What is now the weight of the applicant ?

What is now the height of the applicant ?

Is there any infirmity of body, or any striking peculiarity ?

How is the appetite for food and drink ?

Is the applicant active, vigorous, running about and noticing things, or the contrary ?

What is the state of the sense of sight ? Is the eye bright or dull ?

What is the state of the sense of hearing ? Is it quick or sluggish ?

Does the applicant show any sensibility to musical sounds ?

What is the state of the sense of smell ?

What is the state of the sense of taste ? Is the applicant particular about what he (or she) eats ; or will he (or she) swallow things without regard to taste ?

Is he (or she) gluttonous ?

What are the habits of the applicant with regard to personal cleanliness ?

Can the applicant talk, and, if so, like a person of what age ?

Can he (or she) make a regular sentence, containing nouns, verbs in the conditional mode, adjectives and adverbs, &c. ?

Does he (or she) use understandingly such words as *or* and *if* ?

Please give several specimens of his (or her) mode of talking, and be careful to put down the words exactly as he (or she) uses them.

Can he dress and undress himself ?

Can he feed himself ?

Does he use a spoon, or knife and fork ?

Can he tie his shoes in a regular knot ?

Can he do any work, and what kind ?

What are his personal habits ?

Does he hide, break, or destroy things ?

Does he get up in the night and wander about ?

Is he (or she) obedient ?

Does he (or she) come when called ?

Does he (or she) go astray ?

Is he (or she) passionate ?

Is he (or she) given to self-abuse, or masturbation ?

Has there been such watchfulness that you can be sure he (or she) is free from all habits of self-pollution ?

Please state any facts that may show the peculiar character of the applicant.

TERMS OF ADMISSION, &c.

THE best age for admission is between six and twelve years.

The institution is not intended for epileptic or insane children, nor for those who are incurably hydrocephalic or paralytic, and any such will not be retained, to the exclusion of more improvable subjects.

Children will be received upon trial for one month, at the end of which time a report upon the case will be made to the parents.

Children must come well provided with plain, strong clothing, and stout shoes for walking in any weather. They must be renewed as often as is necessary, at the expense of the applicants. Those who tear and destroy their clothing must be provided with garments made expressly for them, and of such form and texture as not to be easily torn.

The children of indigent parents, in Massachusetts, will be received gratis. For others, a charge will be made proportionate to the trouble and cost of treating them.

Sufficient surety will be required for the removal of the pupils whenever they may be discharged.

Persons applying for the admission of children as beneficiaries of Massachusetts, should address the Governor. They must also fill out certain blanks, the form of which is as follows: —

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR BENEFICIARIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

185 .

To his Excellency the Governor : —

SIR, — The undersigned, citizen of Massachusetts, and inhabitant of the town of _____, respectfully represents that his

son [or daughter],* named _____ and aged _____ years, is so deficient in intellect that he cannot be taught in the Common Schools, as other youth are ; and he therefore requests that your Excellency would recommend him for admission as a pupil to the Massachusetts School for teaching and training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons, as a State beneficiary.

Respectfully yours, _____.

The application should be accompanied by two certificates, in the following form : † —

I.

185 .

I, _____, one of the selectmen of the town of _____ hereby certify, that, in my opinion, _____ is not wealthy, and could not well afford to pay \$ 150 per year for the instruction of _____ at the School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons.
(Signed,) _____.

II.

185 .

I, _____, citizen of Massachusetts, physician, and practitioner in the town of _____ hereby certify, that I have examined _____ and find that he is not insane, but is so deficient in mental ability that he cannot be taught in the Common Schools, as others of his age are.

His bodily health is _____, and he has no cutaneous or contagious disorder.

(Signed,) _____.

N. B. The physician is earnestly requested to state, in writing, his opinion of the *cause* of the person's mental deficiency ; to state whether he is or has been epileptic ; also, to mention any organic or functional peculiarity that he may have observed. It may be greatly for the advantage of the person, that the physician should send in writing a full and minute account of the case, with his own thoughts and suggestions in regard to it.

* If a town pauper, the overseers of the poor may apply as for their ward.

† The same may be used in Rhode Island.

If the applicant is admitted as a beneficiary, he must be provided with a paper signed by two responsible persons, in form of a guaranty for removal, as follows : —

185 .

We, the undersigned, citizens of Massachusetts, and householders in the town of _____, respectively pledge ourselves, that, should _____ be received into the Massachusetts School for teaching and training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, he shall be kept properly supplied with decent clothing, that he shall be removed during vacations, (if his removal be required,) and that, whenever he shall be discharged, he shall be removed at once, and the institution relieved from all responsibility for his support.

(Signed,) _____.

For further particulars, address DR. S. G. HOWE, Boston.

OFFICERS

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC AND
FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH,

FOR 1855.

PRESIDENT.

S. G. HOWE.

VICE-PRESIDENT.

EMORY WASHBURN.

TREASURER.

STEPHEN FAIRBANKS.

SECRETARY.

EDWARD JARVIS.

TRUSTEES.

SAMUEL ELIOT,
SAMUEL HOAR,
ROBERT W. HOOPER,
S. G. HOWE,
EDWARD JARVIS,
WILLIAM MINOT,
SAMPSON REED,
BARNAS SEARS,

*In behalf of the
Corporation.*

ORIN P. BACON,
JOHN FLINT,
JOSEPH REYNOLDS,
STEPHEN M. WELD,

*In behalf of the
State.*